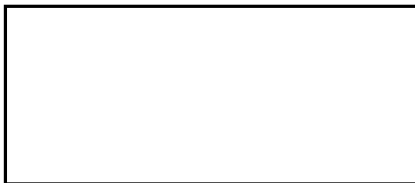


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DAILY BRIEF

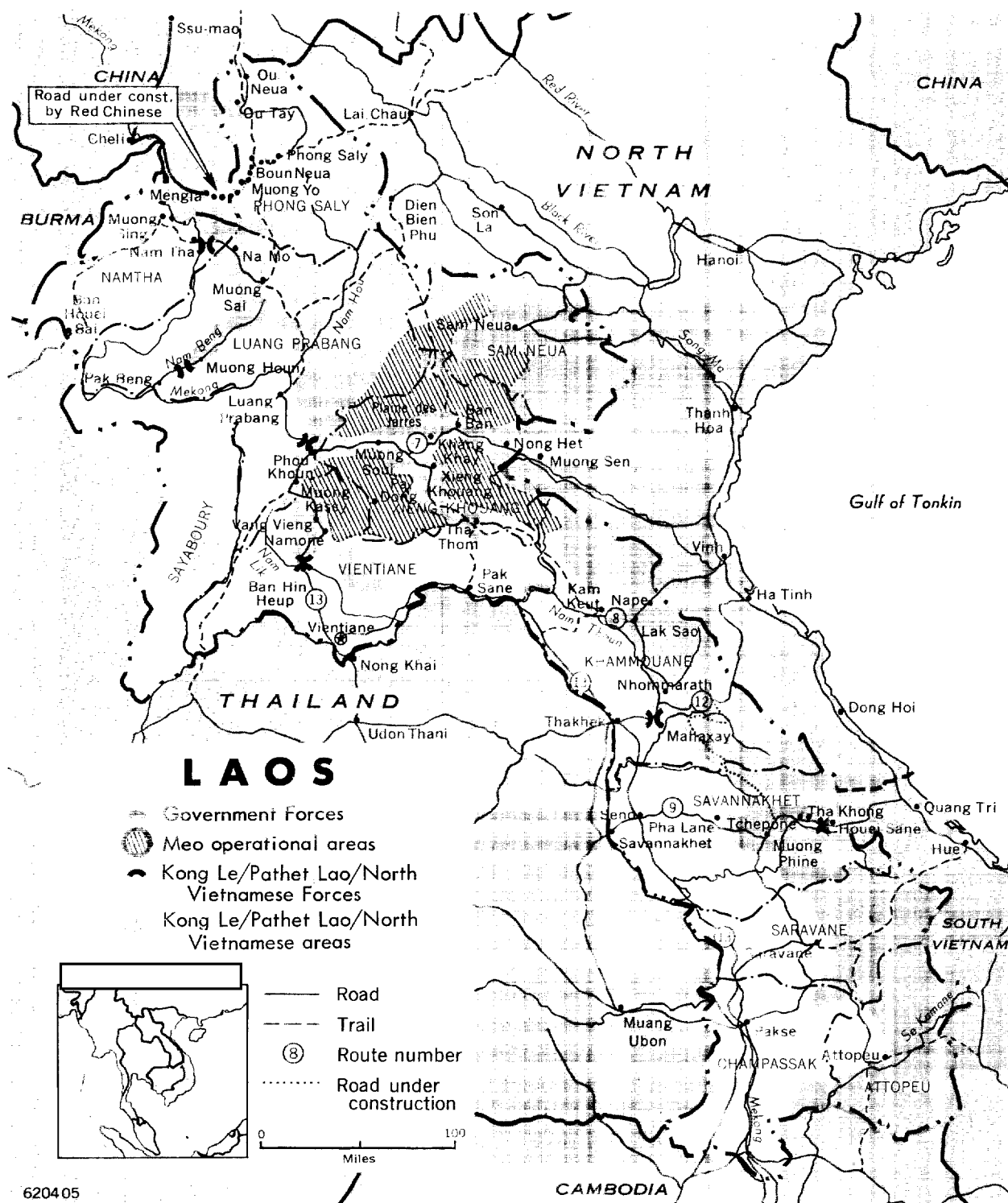
***Syria:** An atmosphere of tension persists in Damascus as military officers and politicians continue behind-the-scenes maneuvers for control of the government. Chief of Staff Zahr al-Din has announced the formation of a new military command which he says "has won the confidence of all the army units," but he has not disclosed the names of any of its members. Nasir believes that a conservative, anti-UAR military faction has temporarily gained the upper hand in Syria and that it will try to avoid implementing the Homs compromise agreement which ended the rebellion on 3 April. This belief would appear well founded judging from attacks since last Wednesday by Damascus radio on Radio Cairo. A Swiss official has advised a US Embassy officer in Bern that the seven "exiled" members of the former Syrian military command expect to return to Syria in the near future.

Aleppo remains quiet, but uneasy. The curfew, which applies throughout the day and night except for three hours each morning, is being enforced with increasing strictness, and potential trouble sectors have been all but sealed off by the army and police.

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France-Algeria: De Gaulle will reportedly base his decision as to whether to dissolve parliament in the near future on the outcome of the 8 April referendum on his Algerian policy. While a large majority of those voting are expected to respond affirmatively, a high percentage of abstentions--implying disapproval of the regime as a whole rather than opposition solely to the Evian accords--would probably weight the scales against

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a decision to dissolve parliament and to call new elections in the near future. If a high percentage of the electorate abstains, Premier Debré, who is almost universally unpopular, might soon be replaced by Georges Pompidou, former head of De Gaulle's personal staff.

Meanwhile, there are still conflicting reports on the influence and intentions of the Secret Army Organization (OAS) in France. While some reports indicate the OAS has lost all political influence, according to one Sureté Nationale official a study of the OAS prepared for Interior Minister Frey indicates that its "structure" has not been seriously damaged by recent government actions and that it still has strong support in the army. [REDACTED]

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Communist China - Laos: Chinese Communist military personnel, either in regular units or under civilian cover, are apparently constructing the road which Peiping agreed last year to build in northern Laos as a gift to the Souvanna government. Pathet Lao leader Souphannouvong [REDACTED] two companies of Chinese Communist army engineers were employed on the project. [REDACTED] recently stated that the road is being built by demobilized Chinese troops and that Peiping had asked the Souvanna government that they be permitted to carry arms. [REDACTED] the road, which will link China's Yunnan Province with Phong Saly, is scheduled to be completed by the end of this month. Military personnel are often used for road construction in Communist China. [REDACTED]

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*Angola: Holden Roberto's formation of a provisional Angolan government in Leopoldville on 5 April reportedly is part of a desperate attempt by Roberto's newly formed Angolan [REDACTED]

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[National Liberation Front to maintain its international position in the face of increasingly effective competition from its rival, the Communist-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Roberto's Angolan Peoples' Union and its associate in the Front, the Angolan Democratic party, apparently still control most of the rebel activity in Angola. While the MPLA has been unable to mount any operations in Angola, it has been exploiting the general dissatisfaction of African governments with Roberto's continued refusal to merge with the MPLA. Roberto's representatives apparently are touring Africa to drum up support for his organization, but African governments--particularly the radical Casablanca group--are likely to delay recognition, especially if the MPLA forms a rival government. MPLA spokesmen have already charged that Roberto's action has "betrayed the cause of Angolan nationalism."]

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Spain-Morocco: [The Spanish Government is now reportedly willing to negotiate with Morocco regarding the future of Ifni and the Spanish Sahara. Madrid would agree to give up Ifni and share any oil found in the Sahara on a 50-50 basis with Morocco, but is unwilling to relinquish its sovereignty over the Spanish Sahara or the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco.]

[The Spanish have generally shown themselves more flexible than the Portuguese in making concessions to nationalist pressures on their overseas holdings. Their willingness, since 1956, to grant many Moroccan demands suggests that Spain would also be ready to make concessions to African nationalism when pressures develop in Rio Muni and Fernando Po.] [Map]

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The French Referendum and the Question of New Elections

De Gaulle will make his decision concerning elections, according to the authoritative Le Monde, on the day following the referendum. A number of factors, including the security situations in France and Algeria, will also be taken into consideration. The official purpose of the referendum has been blurred by his interpretation--repeatedly stressed by Debré and other Union for the New Republic (UNR) leaders--that a heavy vote will in effect constitute a "blank check" for De Gaulle's other policies. The major political parties, except for the UNR, are taking the position that a "yes" vote applies solely to the Algerian settlement, and even to that with reservations.

According to a French Institute of Public Opinion survey conducted between 27 and 30 March, 68 percent of those interviewed indicated they will vote yes in the referendum, 5 percent no, 6 percent refused to answer, and 21 percent were undecided or will not vote. The embassy estimates that between 85 and 90 percent of those voting will vote affirmatively, but notes that the government is somewhat concerned that the abstention rate will be high, perhaps even topping the 23.5-percent abstentions in the 1961 referendum endorsing De Gaulle's self-determination policy for Algeria. If this occurs, De Gaulle may conclude that the present climate of opinion would not be conducive to the election of a legislature as obedient as the present one. He still seems reluctant to involve himself personally in the campaigning for "loyal Gaullist" candidates. In interpreting the electoral climate UNR leaders will bear in mind the 5 March municipal election at Mont-de-Marsan in southwestern France--where a UNR list lost to a leftist coalition--and several other municipal elections in which the Communists have regained strongholds they lost shortly after De Gaulle returned to power.

The constitution provides that following a dissolution of parliament, elections must be held between 20 and 40 days. Dissolution pronounced on 9 April would put them in the period

29 April-20 May. Since there are few candidates for a lame-duck premiership, Debré would probably be asked to stay on. If De Gaulle, however, decides against early dissolution, he will probably seek to reduce some of the accumulated resentment against the government--personified by Debré's high-handed tactics--by appointing a new premier. Pompidou is currently said to have the inside track, but Minister for Algerian Affairs Joxe is also considered a possibility because of his role in concluding the Evian accords. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Possibility of Spanish-Moroccan Negotiations Over
Territorial Issue

In April 1956 the Spaniards turned their northern protectorate in Morocco over to Rabat. Two years later they withdrew from their southern protectorate and by the end of August 1961 had pulled the last of their forces from these territories. Madrid has consistently refused to give up Ceuta and Melilla, maintaining that they are integral parts of metropolitan Spain. Morocco has not yet made a formal claim to these enclaves, although the Moroccan ambassador to France on 5 October publicly listed them among the Spanish-held areas claimed by Morocco. There have been indications that the Spaniards might be willing to give up Ifni in return for Moroccan guarantees on the enclaves. The question of Spanish Sahara might be negotiable if Madrid felt it could be retained only by a costly and protracted military effort.

Relations between Spain and Morocco have been far from cordial and at times have been severely strained by incidents along the Spanish Saharan border and by Moroccan attacks on Ifni. Since mid-February Moroccan customs officials have been harassing travelers en route to Ceuta by overzealous inspections. The Spaniards have charged the Moroccans with failure to meet them halfway in efforts to solve outstanding problems. Specifically, they point to Rabat's failure to carry out economic and financial agreements made in 1957 and its refusal in 1958 to accept a Spanish offer to submit the Ifni issue to arbitration. [REDACTED]

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